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STATE CONVENTION—3RD AD. SES.] [MAY, 1862.

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THE CONSCRIPTION ACT—LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
RALEIGH, N. C., May 5th, 1862.

Hon. WELDON N. EDWARDS,
President of the Convention:

I have the honor to enclose to the Convention, through you, a copy of a letter addressed to me by the Secretary of War, in answer to some inquiries about the construction of the Conscription Act. This letter contains all the information I have of the Law, except such publications as have been authorized by the War Department, and published in the newspapers.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully,
HENRY T. CLARK.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA,
WAR DEPARTMENT,
RICHMOND, April 30th, 1862.

His Excellency,
Gov. HENRY T. CLARK,
Raleigh, N. C.

SIR: Your letter of the 24th instant was received on yesterday. In reply I have the honor to say, that the effect of

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the Conscription Act is to suspend calls on the States for quotas. The number of men between the ages of 18 and 35 is assumed to be precisely in the ratio of population.

The first effect of the Act is to retain in the service all soldiers who were there on the 16th April. The next, to fill up the regiments and companies with men liable to military duty under the act, by replacing those men on service who will be exempt from age, with those not now on service, not so exempt, and thus to fill and keep full the existing corps to the maximum allowed by law. If any States have not enough regiments in the service, or heretofore authorized by the Department to be raised to absorb the material between the ages 18 and 35, the excess will be collected in Camps of Instruction, disciplined, and brought into service, pursuant to section 9 of the Act.

I will accept the State Troops in their present organization, to be received on the same footing with other regiments already in the Confederate service, the men over 35 and under 18 to be discharged within 90 days from the 16th April, and their places supplied from the enrolled Conscripts. The right of re-organization, by election, belongs only to 12 months men. Those whose enlistment is for a longer or a shorter period, remain in the service on their existing organizations. These general remarks are supposed to answer several of your specific inquiries. The enrolment of Conscripts will be made as soon as the requisite regulations can be prepared, in order to relieve the men now in service who are over 35 years of age.

2. The State Troops will be received as stated above.

3. Men over 35 years of age now in service will be discharged within 90 days. They or others not now in service will be at liberty to serve by voluntary enlistment, but not in lieu of Conscripts, except as substitutes.

4. Volunteering is not stopped by the Conscript Bill. By section 13, persons liable as Conscripts may volunteer in any company now in service. You are referred specially to Regulations 8 to 11 inclusive. The act approved December 11th, 1861, providing for the payment of bounty to volunteers for the war continues in force.

5. Militia officers between 18 and 35 are embraced by the Conscription Act.

The quota of each State, under existing laws, will be all liable to military duty under the Act of April 16th.

I enclose a copy of the Act and Regulations established for carrying it into effect.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

GEO. W. RANDOLPH,

Secretary of War.

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